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BRAGGADOCIO CAN BE DANGEROUS

When will it stop? The giving away to Russia of security information has been going on too long. Liable to be put out of business are Russian espionage agents when classified security information is broadcast gratis with our compliments. The recent case of the "missing documents" at the Hanford Washington, atomic energy plant is but another case in point. Here the matter was a "poor housekeeping" problem in which large numbers of secret documents which could relate to the hydrogen bomb were misplaced. The Russians might almost as well have gotten them because they are of no use to us if we can't find them.

Perhaps it is as criminal to lose such papers through carelessness as to sell them to espionage agents for a king's ransom. It was reported that careless handling of important documents had been going on for a long time at Hanford. Even if the papers turned up, there is a possibility they could have been copied in the interim by spies, intending to create the deception that no harm had been done by placing them in a position to be "found."

A news item recently carried a cataloging of just how much of certain kinds of military equipment we have. As Allen Dulles, Director of the Central Intelligence Agency recently declared, "I would give a good deal if I could know as much about the Soviet Union as the Soviet Union can learn about us by merely reading the press."

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Actually, it is not the press that is the great offender. It is rather our technical and scientific journals' revelations during congressional hearings and some of the so-called popular magazines. It may be the result of an innate characteristic of the American people to boast about our achievements. Our national superiority complex can get us in trouble if in our boasting we reveal secrets that can be eventually used against us.

However, the U. S. is not the only offender among the free nations. There is at present circulating abroad a British pamphlet selling for 70 cents which is said to contain "atomic energy information of type long kept highly secret in this country." It has been averred that this pamphlet contains enough classified information to send "a person to jail and possibly to death as a traitor" if it were made public by an American scientist.

This special American, and to some extent British, foible must be corrected lest we find ourselves in the position of the cave man who stood on a hill and brandished his spear at his club-wielding opponent to impress the latter with his cleverness and also to scare him. The other caveman went home and made a longer spear and returned to attack and defeat his braggadocio opponent. Opposition is not frightened by a display of power. It merely desires to know how much you have so it can amass more to outreach you.